

Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of)	
)	
Rules and Regulations Implementing)	CG Docket No. 02-386
Minimum Customer Account Record)	
Exchange Obligations on All Local and)	
Interexchange Carriers)	
)	

REPLY COMMENTS OF GVNW CONSULTING, INC.

Introduction

GVNW Consulting, Inc. (GVNW Consulting) respectfully submits reply comments in response to the Commission's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in the instant docket released March 25, 2004. GVNW Consulting is a management consulting firm providing an array of consulting services to rural carriers throughout the United States and in the Pacific Basin. GVNW clients generally serve high costs areas and offer their rural customers the full panoply of telecommunications services that include dial-up Internet access, broadband, and video.

The Commission initiated this NPRM in response to petitions filed requesting updates to the customer account record exchange (CARE) system that would reflect market changes. The CARE system is a voluntary industry standard for the exchange of customer information that was adopted post-divestiture. The CARE system is maintained by the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions' Ordering and Billing Forum (OBF). To date, local exchange carriers have handled the exchange of such information between their operations centers and interexchange carriers serving their customers.

ANY MANDATORY STANDARDS IMPOSED BY THE COMMISSION SHOULD
BE THE MINIMUM REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE THE STANDARD DESIRED

We agree with commenters who have stated that what is important is that the information exchange take place, as opposed to the format of the data or the methodology employed to conduct the exchange. Cincinnati Bell is correct in stating that the Commission should impose “only the minimal amount of regulation necessary to address the problem.”

ANY MANDATORY CARE REQUIREMENTS SHOULD BE TECHNOLOGY
NEUTRAL

In its comments, the CTIA opined that there was “no basis” for imposing CARE obligations on wireless carriers. We disagree, and find it particularly ironic that some parties have proposed that an additional customer account code be required to indicate that a customer has switched to a wireless service provider. We encourage the Commission to reject such a proposal. We agree with Bell South that any new rules should be imposed equally “to competitive and incumbent carriers, as well as IXC’s.”

If the Commission is determined to add an additional regulatory burden to wireline carriers, then it should be similarly imposed on wireless carriers. To unilaterally impose the requirement on only the wireline community is to incorrectly assume that porting of numbers is a one-way proposition. The Commission should not further exacerbate the regulatory preference it has bestowed upon the wireless carriers in the context of its number portability proceedings.

MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS IMPOSE A DISPROPORTIONATE BURDEN ON SMALL, RURAL CARRIERS

Imposition of mandatory CARE requirements would have a larger impact on small, rural carriers. The record in this proceeding indicates that small, rural carriers approach CARE data differently. Some carriers process their PIC charges manually, while others use a mechanized CARE process. Some of the proposed changes would likely force some of the smallest LECs to modify what are currently adequate processes to meet a uniform standard, when the low volume of records processed do not justify such a modification.

The Commission should adopt CARE policies that balance the needs of IXC's with the needs of rural carriers. Such a balancing would require that any costs related to mandatory CARE standards be addressed under one of the following two alternatives. One approach, as suggested by NTCA at page 3, would be that the "new cost burdens" be "placed squarely on the IXC beneficiaries that propose the rule." A second approach, and one that broadens the base of payers, would be for the Commission to clearly state in its Order that any costs related to mandatory CARE standards are directly assignable to the interstate jurisdiction for rate-of-return carriers.

At a minimum, the Commission should investigate less burdensome requirements on at least the rural carrier segment, recognizing basic concepts related to a cost/benefit analysis. Qwest properly stated in its comments that: "... the costs associated with adopting an industry-wide standard for data exchanges might well outweigh the benefits and may be in excess of the ultimate objective of promoting exchanges."

Conclusion

If the Commission adopts mandatory CARE requirements, it will impose a new set of burdens that adversely impact rural carriers that may not be justified on a cost/benefit basis. The Commission should utilize the existing OBF forum as the appropriate venue for considering both existing and new issues concerning CARE.

Respectfully submitted

Submitted via FCC electronic filing system

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